

**TESTIMONY OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**

**IN SUPPORT  
OF L.D. 848**

**“An Act To Increase the Safety of Hunting”**

**SPONSORED BY: Senator BURNS of Washington.**

**CO-SPONSORED BY:** Representative ALLEY of Beals and Senators: DAVIS of Piscataquis, DUTREMBLE of York, GERZOFISKY of Cumberland, KATZ of Kennebec, WHITTEMORE of SOMERSET, Representatives: DUNPHY of Embden, SHERMAN of Hodgdon, WOOD of Sabattus.

**DATE OF HEARING: March 24, 2015**

Good afternoon Senator Davis, Representative Shaw and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Colonel Joel Wilkinson, of the Maine Warden Service representing the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, in support of **LD 848.**

The Department supports legislation that reinforces ethical and safe hunting practices while balancing ample opportunities to all those who choose to engage in the sport of hunting. This bill specifically targets the activity of road hunting and hunting from a motor vehicle. Currently, we have laws in place to address these issues, but this bill increases penalties to include minimum mandatory fines and further increases the distance from 10 feet to 100 feet for the purpose of shooting at game from or near a paved way. It further establishes that the point of reference for measuring the distance is to occur from the center of the pavement and not from the edge of the pavement. Each year the Maine Warden Service deals with a significant complaint load regarding unlawful road hunting activity. Much of this activity occurs within the 100 yards of occupied dwellings. This activity not only creates significant safety concerns but paints an extremely poor image of hunting practices to a large portion of the public who does not hunt. The bill would certainly reinforce to all hunters that the State does not support this activity. It should be noted that some hunters need special accommodations to hunt due to a disability. The Department has a process in place to permit these activities for those individuals which allows them to shoot from a motor vehicle.

One portion of this bill that may be problematic from an enforcement standpoint speaks to the requirement that during the open firearm season on deer individuals may not have in or on a motor vehicle or in or on a trailer or other type of vehicle being hauled by a motor vehicle, a firearm with a rifled barrel unless that firearm is enclosed in a case.

With constantly evolving firearms and ammunition technology available in the form of longer range, tighter grouped buck-shot rounds, smooth barreled shotguns able to shoot slugs accurately to 100 yards or more, highly accurate smooth-bore black powder muzzle-loaders, and high power handguns with optics, we would recommend if the committee chooses to proceed with this portion of the bill that careful consideration is given to this section.

I would be glad to answer any questions you may have either now or during the work session.